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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

GENERAL BOOKS AND BOOKS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

Mental and Moral Heredity in Royalty. A Statistical Study in History and Psychology. By FREDERICK ADAMS WOODS, M.D.
(New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1906. Pp. viii, 312.)

THE author prefaces his treatise by saying that there has been much discussion concerning the relative importance of heredity, environment and free will in determining the intellectual and moral qualities of the individual; but that this discussion has led to no definite conclusions because no one of these possible sources of power has been studied with sufficient fullness of detail. A more searching and complete investigation is desirable because if it can be shown that heredity is a more potent force in the moulding of human character and achievement than the accidents of surroundings, we shall be better qualified to determine what ought to be done and what can be done in the solution of some perplexing race and social problems.

Concerning the great mass of mankind, however, no such investigation is possible. It is one of the commonplaces of some schools of philosophical historians that stirring times, favorable opportunities, acute crises produce great geniuses. But they also produce many millions of mediocrities. And some critical periods pass without raising up Mohammeds and Luthers. Until the pedigrees of great groups of men have been tracked several generations and the mental and moral values of each unit in these pedigrees be approximately stated, until from data so obtained it be discovered that no formulas for heredity can be derived, and until, in case such formulas can be derived, it is proven that the appearance of geniuses, imbeciles and degenerates is not in accordance with the expectations raised by those formulas, then and not until then, will it be possible to assert in any given case that heredity is not a controlling influence.

The royal families of Europe constitute the only field where the material for the study of these questions can be had in sufficient quantity. Even here, however, one is led now and then into a blind alley, for in the construction of genealogical charts of many royal persons of modern times, one comes upon names in the family tree which have to be marked "obscure", names about whose bearers nothing definite can be ascertained. Wherever possible, however, these persons are graded twice, in this work, in the scale of 10, once for character and again for intellect. These grades are arrived at by averaging the judgments given in the great biographical dictionaries and certain standard historical treatises.

At first blush this method of formulating judgments seems unlikely to secure results of sufficient definiteness and accuracy; especially when, casting the eye down the lists, one observes grouped in grade 5 for intellect, Louis XVI. of France, Emperor Leopold II., a clever, cautious politician, Emperor Rudolf II., a dull bigot, Frederick William IV. of Prussia, who whatever his limitations as a man of action, was remarkably gifted in many ways, and the late Emperor Frederick of Germany. Again, any rating for morals which puts Frederick William I., Frederick the Great, and the Great Elector of Prussia in grades 3, 4, and 5 respectively and accords to Emperor Francis II. of Austria the distinction of 7, seems open to grave question.

However, the arrangement of the broad classes of geniuses, imbeciles, lunatics, degenerates and mediocrities is a simpler and easier matter than these more sharply drawn classifications, and in the main suffices for the author's enquiry.

Applying this broad classification to the pedigrees of the royal personages under review, the author concludes that the results obtained correspond in the main with Galton's law based on certain physical attributes in animals, that heredity accounts more satisfactorily for the appearance of genius or the reverse than environment or opportunity, that the inbreeding of families may be beneficial when the stocks can be graded high and are free from taint, that great power of mind and high character are more often found associated than separate, that the able and the noble are more apt to have numerous offspring than the intellectually feeble and the morally degraded, pointing thus to the survival of the fittest and the elevation of the race. Even if his conclusions be accepted in full, however, environment remains a force to be reckoned with. Doubtless some genius now and then breaks the leashes of circumstance as fast as they are laid upon him, with no apparent loss in the development of his speed. Others get into the running only occasionally. And it is scarcely open to question that others never shake themselves loose from these bonds at all.

The author has done his work with skill and good judgment and his book will be especially profitable for reproof and instruction to political doctrinaires of every school.

Études Sociales et Juridiques sur l'Antiquité Grecque. Par GUSTAVE GLOTZ. (Paris: Hachette et Cie. 1906. Pp. 303.)

THE protection of life, property, and race purity belonged at first to the clan (*genos*). The parricide, the adulteress, and the erring maid were left to the anger of the clan gods—the only gods there were. They became by excommunication outcasts, unless they proved their innocence by an appeal to the ordeal, or judgment of god. The killing of a foreigner, on the other hand, started a feud, or war between the clans, which could be ended only by the blood-covenant. Then, in the Greek Middle